

North Carolina and Sweden: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education Swedish Approaches

Program Overview

In 2003 and 2005 a total of 29 state and community leaders, early childhood stakeholders and child development researchers traveled to Sweden to examine model strategies and best practices in the provision of early childhood services in Sweden.

Program Sponsors

The Center for International Understanding's mission is "Learning from the world, serving North Carolina." Since 1979 the Center has provided unique global education for policy leaders, educators and citizens, sending more than 8,000 North Carolinians to 48 different countries and hosting more than 4,000 international visitors. Dedicated to helping North Carolinians live and work effectively with people of all cultures, the Center is a public service program of The University of North Carolina. More information about the Center can be found at ciu.northcarolina.edu. The FPG Child Development Institute (FPG) is a research institute located at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (www.fpg.unc.edu). It is one of the nation's oldest multidisciplinary institutes for the study of young children and their families. Research and education activities focus on child development and health, including child care quality and teacher education.

Program Goal & Objectives

The study program, *North Carolina and Sweden: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education*, was designed to support the state's capacity to increase the quality of early childhood experiences through the implementation of best practices. Sweden, internationally renowned for its quality services to young children and their families, provided an ideal venue for a study of early childhood best practices. The Swedish system of education provides an affordable, accessible, quality network of early care and education services for all its citizens. This system of early care and education brims with translatable characteristics that can take a "ready" state like North Carolina to the next level of systemic early childhood service provision.

Specific objectives of *North Carolina and Sweden: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education* were to:

- Study best practices in early childhood education in Sweden;
- Identify translatable characteristics to inform the work of NC as it strives to strengthen services for children ages 0-5;
- Develop and implement personal and local action plans, adapting lessons learned abroad to local needs; and